

Appl. No. 09/837,020
Amdt. Dated February 20, 2006

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method of preventing defective germination or growth of a plant comprising the steps of:

encapsulating at least one plant seed of a light germinator in an aqueous gel capsule having a moisture content of at least 90% by weight, the at least one plant seed having a size of 1 mm or less;
capsule;

refrigerating the at least one plant seed under one of a humidifying condition or in an airtight container so that moisture is not lost from the aqueous gel capsule and under the condition that the at least one plant seed does not germinate; and

sowing the at least one plant seed.

Claim 2 (Canceled):

Claim 3 (Original): The method of preventing defective germination or growth of a plant according to claim 1, wherein the refrigeration is carried out in a dark place.

Appl. No. 09/837,020
Amdt. Dated February 20, 2006

Claims 4-6 (Canceled):

Claim 7 (Previously presented): The method of preventing defective germination or growth of a plant as claimed in claim 1, wherein the at least one plant seed encapsulated in an aqueous gel capsule is a pelletized seed.

Claim 8-12 (Canceled):

Claim 13 (Previously presented): The method of preventing defective germination or growth of a plant according to claim 1, wherein the step of refrigerating the at least one encapsulated plant seed is conducted at a temperature of about 15°C or lower and for a sufficient period of time to improve the germination of the at least one encapsulated plant seed as compared to non-refrigerated encapsulated plant seeds.

Claim 14 (New): The method of preventing defective germination or growth of a plant according to claim 1, wherein refrigerating step is conducted in an airtight container.

Claim 15 (New): The method of preventing defective germination or growth of a plant according to claim 1, wherein the at least one plant seed comprises a seed of at least one of *Eustoma russellianum*,

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begonia, *Campanula portenschlagiana*, large-flowered *Campanula portenschlagiana*, *Digitalis purpurea*, *Primula malacoides*, *Primula obconica*, *Aquilegia*, *Almeria*, *Callistephus chinensis*, *Dianthus*, *Echinacea purpurea*, *Erigeron*, *Gaillardia*, *Helianthus annuus*, *Helenium autumnale*, *Heliopsis*, *Heuchera*, *Incarvillea delavayi*, *lychnis*, *salvia*, lettuce, tobacco, *perilla*, fig, burdock, mitsuba and celery.

Claim 16 (New) The method of preventing defective germination or growth of a plant according to claim 1, wherein the gel capsule comprises at least one of Gellan gum, xanthan gum, Locust bean gum, carboxymethyl cellulose, pectin, gelatin, Carrageenan, sodium polyacrylate, and agar.